

What is claimed is:

1. An image classification apparatus for classifying
image data sets added with accompanying information including
information items, the image classification apparatus
5 comprising:

accompanying information obtaining means for obtaining
the accompanying information from the image data sets;

information item specification means for specifying a
portion of or all of the information items of the accompanying
10 information to be used for image classification, and for
specifying priority among the specified information items; and

image classification means for classifying the image data
sets into groups having a hierarchical structure of the
specified information items according to the specified
15 priority.

2. The image classification apparatus according to Claim
1, wherein the accompanying information includes
classification condition information representing a set of the
information items to be used for image classification and
20 the information item specification means specifies the
information items to be used for image classification according
to the classification condition information.

3. The image classification apparatus according to Claim
2, wherein the accompanying information includes at least one
25 of items comprising time and date of photography, a photography

condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type of a subject, the name of the subject, the number of objects as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items thereof.

5 4. The image classification apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the accompanying information includes classification condition information representing a combination of the information items to be used for image classification and the priority thereof, and

10 the information item specification means specifies the information items to be used for image classification and the priority thereof, according to the classification condition information.

 5. The image classification apparatus according to Claim 15 4, wherein the accompanying information includes at least one of items comprising time and date of photography, a photography condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type of a subject, the name of the subject, the number of objects as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items 20 thereof.

 6. The image classification apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the accompanying information includes at least one of items comprising time and date of photography, a photography condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type 25 of a subject, the name of the subject, the number of objects

as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items thereof.

7. A program for causing a computer to execute a process of classifying image data sets added with accompanying
5 information including information items, the program comprising the steps of:

obtaining the accompanying information from the image data sets;

specifying a portion of or all of the information items
10 of the accompanying information to be used for image classification and for specifying priority among the specified information items; and

classifying the image data sets into groups having a hierarchical structure of the specified information items
15 according to the specified priority.

8. The program according to Claim 7, wherein the accompanying information includes classification condition information representing a set of the information items to be used for image classification, and

20 the step of specifying the information items is the step of specifying the information items to be used for image classification according to the classification condition information.

9. The program according to Claim 8, wherein the
25 accompanying information includes at least one of items

comprising time and date of photography, a photography condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type of a subject, the name of the subject, the number of objects as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items
5 thereof.

10. The program according to Claim 7, wherein the accompanying information includes classification condition information representing a combination of the information items to be used for image classification and the priority thereof,
10 and

the step of specifying the information items and the priority is the step of specifying the information items to be used for image classification and the priority thereof, according to the classification condition information.

15 11. The program according to Claim 10, wherein the accompanying information includes at least one of items comprising time and date of photography, a photography condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type of a subject, the name of the subject, the number of objects
20 as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items thereof.

12. The program according to Claim 7, wherein the accompanying information includes at least one of items comprising time and date of photography, a photography
25 condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type

of a subject, the name of the subject, the number of objects as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items thereof.

5 13. A computer readable recording medium storing thereon a program for causing a computer to execute a process of classifying image data sets added with accompanying information including information items, the program comprising the steps of:

10 obtaining the accompanying information from the image data sets;

 specifying a portion of or all of the information items of the accompanying information to be used for image classification and for specifying priority among the specified
15 information items; and

 classifying the image data sets into groups having a hierarchical structure of the specified information items according to the specified priority.

 14. The computer readable recording medium according to
20 Claim 13, wherein the accompanying information includes classification condition information representing a set of the information items to be used for image classification, and
 the step of specifying the information items is the step of specifying the information items to be used for image
25 classification according to the classification condition

information.

15. The computer readable recording medium according to Claim 14, wherein the accompanying information includes at least one of items comprising time and date of photography, a photography condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type of a subject, the name of the subject, the number of objects as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items thereof.

16. The computer readable recording medium according to Claim 13, wherein the accompanying information includes classification condition information representing a combination of the information items to be used for image classification and the priority thereof, and

the step of specifying the information items and the priority is the step of specifying the information items to be used for image classification and the priority thereof, according to the classification condition information.

17. The computer readable recording medium according to Claim 16, wherein the accompanying information includes at least one of items comprising time and date of photography, a photography condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type of a subject, the name of the subject, the number of objects as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items thereof.

18. The computer readable recording medium according to

Claim 13, wherein the accompanying information includes at least one of items comprising time and date of photography, a photography condition, a photography location, a size of an image, the type of a subject, the name of the subject, the number
5 of objects as the subject, an event, and a comment, as the information items thereof.